

THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

STEVE GODINA OCHOA,

Defendant.

CASE NO. CR21-0149-JCC

ORDER

This matter comes before the Court on Defendant's unopposed motion to proceed with his sentencing hearing by videoconference (Dkt. No. 38). Having thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court hereby GRANTS the motion for the reasons explained herein.

Defendant pleaded of guilty to possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and heroin, possession of child pornography, and two counts for illegal firearms possession. (Dkt. Nos. 29, 31, 35.) His sentencing on these counts is scheduled for January 11, 2022. (Dkt. No. 29.) However, Defendant moves to proceed with his sentencing hearing remotely in light of the health risks of exposure to COVID-19. (*See* Dkt. No. 38.) The Government does not oppose the motion.

Under General Order 04-20, felony pleas and sentencings may proceed by video or telephone conferencing if "the district judge in a particular case finds for specific reasons that the

1 plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of
2 justice.” *See also* W.D. Wash. General Orders 14-21 (Dec. 22, 2021) (extending duration of
3 General Order 04-20).

4 Due to the increase in average daily number of individuals testing positive for COVID-
5 19, the Court encourages parties to consider a continuance or holding such proceedings using
6 audio and video conference technology. *See* W.D. Wash. General Order 01-22 (Jan. 7, 2022).

7 Defendant has a strong interest in the speedy resolution of his sentence. (*See* Dkt. No.
8 38.) Under all of these circumstances, the Court FINDS that Defendant’s sentencing hearing
9 cannot be delayed until such time as new COVID-19 cases decrease without serious harm to the
10 interests of justice.

11 For the foregoing reasons, the Court GRANTS Defendant’s motion to proceed with his
12 sentencing hearing by video conference (Dkt. No. 38). Defendant’s sentencing hearing is
13 CONTINUED to January 19, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. to accommodate Federal Detention Center
14 SeaTac’s resources to facilitate remote proceedings. The parties should contact the Courtroom
15 Deputy 24 hours before the hearing to request login or call-in information.

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17 DATED this 7th day of January 2022.

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John C. Coughenour
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE